

Phila, Academy of music  
Proceedings of meeting to  
protest against  
deportation of Belgians  
citizens into servitude  
in Germany. January  
7th, 1917.

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Proceedings

of

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MEETING TO PROTEST

Against

Deportation of Belgian Citizens  
into Servitude in Germany<sup>12</sup>

Sunday Afternoon, January 7th, 1917<sup>13</sup>

ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Philadelphia

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MEETING TO PROTEST

Against

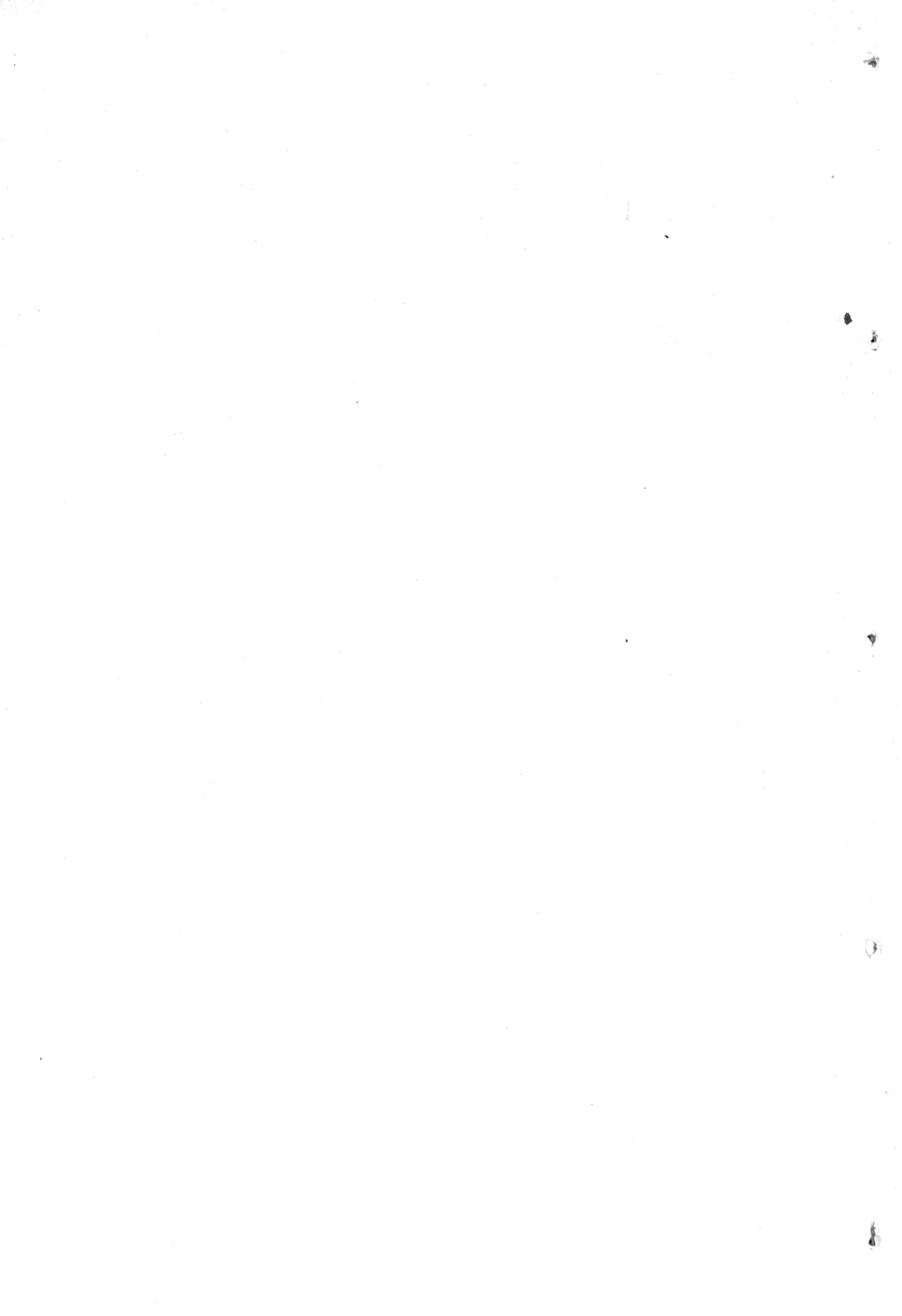
Deportation of Belgian Citizens  
into Servitude in Germany

Sunday Afternoon, January 7th, 1917

ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Philadelphia







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MEETING TO PROTEST AGAINST THE DEPORTA-  
TION OF BELGIAN CITIZENS, ACADEMY  
OF MUSIC, JANUARY 7, 1917.

A meeting to protest against the deportation of Belgian citizens into servitude in Germany was held January 7th, in the Academy of Music at 3.30 o'clock p. m.

The programme opened by the singing of the Belgian National Anthem by the choir, following which an invocation was delivered by Bishop Rhinelander.

**MR. CADWALADER:** The Rev. Bishop Rhinelander will open this meeting with prayer.

**BISHOP PHILIP M. RHINELANDER:** This meeting, if it is to achieve its proper end, must strike a high note, a high spiritual note of deliberation and determination and devotion, and we must maintain it from first to last. A true and grave balance is required of us between generous and great sympathy, intense and righteous indignation and calm and resolute conviction. God is ever ready to enlighten the blindness and reinforce the weakness of His children. We can trust him now to help us as surely as we recognize our need for help.

To open this meeting with prayer to the Almighty and the all loving God ought not to be a mere invocation, but rather a pledge and a promise of His potency and power.

May I ask all to stand while prayer is said.

After these preliminaries the chairman of the meeting, John Cadwalader, addressed the meeting as follows:

ADDRESS OF JOHN CADWALADER, ESQ.,

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Henry James has truly described the present time as "an hour when the civilized peoples are on exhibition—quite finally and sharply on show—to each other and to the world as they absolutely never in their long history have been before." Truly, a moving picture whose film must not pass in silence.

Let me quote some familiar statements that have been made but cannot be too often repeated.

On August 4th, 1914, the Chancellor of the German Empire, von Bethmann-Hollweg, addressing the Reichstag, said: "We are now in the state of necessity, and necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and perhaps are already on Belgian soil. Gentlemen, that is contrary to the dictates of international law—We were compelled to override the just protest of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments. The wrong—I speak openly—that we are committing we will endeavor to make good as soon as our Military goal is reached.

On the same day in his interview with the English Ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, who told him that England would certainly meet the obligation of the treaty she had made with Prussia, Austria, France and Russia binding Belgium to strict neutrality and would protect by force of arms Belgium from invasion, the German Chancellor, expressing utter contempt for any treaty obligation, made the new infamous declaration that it was not possible England would go to war "over a scrap of paper."

Citizens of Philadelphia, the words I have quoted showed the moral barbarism of the nation that has perpetrated the most atrocious acts of physical barbarity that have been known since the era of civilization has been reached.

There is a duty imposed upon humanity everywhere and upon every nation to speak out clearly and distinctly their condemnation of any country guilty of such moral and legal wrongs.

On the 1st of September, 1870, a few days before the battle of Sedan, Count Bernstorff, the father of the present German Ambassador at Washington, then representing Prussia, appealed to Lord Granville, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Great Britain, and while urging England to be strictly neutral, said that "Germany was led to expect that the neutrality of Great Britain, her former ally against Napoleonic aggression, however strict in form, would, at least, be benevolent in spirit to



Germany, for it is impossible for the human mind not to side with one or the other party in a conflict like the present one. What is the use of being right or wrong in the eyes of the World, if the Public remains insensible to the merits of a cause."

"Those who deny the necessity of such distinction forego the appeal to public opinion which we are daily taught to consider as the foremost of the great powers."

This meeting is held, as others for a like purpose have been held in New York, Boston and elsewhere, to denounce the recent most unjustifiable act of Germany in removing the civil population of Belgium from their homes and taking them as slaves to work for their treacherous conquerors.

When we remember that no European power could be induced to recognize the Southern Confederacy because it represented a condition of slavery of the black race (in their borders) it is to-day incredible that any civilized Nation should tolerate or maintain intercourse with a country so barbarous as to enslave their conquered victims.

The plea of the Bernstorff of 1870 struck the keynote of what should have been the attitude of this great neutral power from the moment that Germany by her denial of the obligation of treaties made diplomatic intercourse utterly out of the question. Had we declared our unqualified neutrality at the same time that we denounced the course of the German Government in causing the war and the objects which that government sought, there could have been no Lusitania horrors, no murders of Miss Cawell and Captain Fryatt, no hollow courtesies to the perpetrators of such infamous wrongs and the German people would have understood the attitude of the civilized world against the heathen atrocities which the government of their country had authorized and perpetrated.

To-day when the evidence of Germany's failing strength is shown in her tender of suggestions for peace, however false and insincere they may be, a declaration should be made, that will reach the whole German people, of the impossibility of con-

sidering peace until Germany shall sue for forgiveness and offer every reparation for her conduct in the war. (Applause.) Peace will come when the German people know the truth, and an official statement of this great country cannot be kept from them.

You will now hear the speakers who will address you on the solemn questions of the day, so solemn that it has been thought proper to meet on Sunday, to add emphasis to their feeling that it is not inspired by hate or revenge, but in the spirit of religion, honor, justice and truth. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: I have two letters to present before opening the proceedings, one from the office of the Mayor of the city of Philadelphia, directed to me:

"Dear Sir: The Mayor desires me to acknowledge receipt of your letter and to express his regret that it will be impossible for him to be present at the meeting to protest against the deportation of the civil population of Belgian which is to be held in the Academy to-morrow afternoon, as he is suffering from a very bad cold.

"His Honor desires me to express his sympathy with the purpose of the meeting. Very truly yours,

"Sec'y to the Mayor"

I have also a communication of interest to present:

"At a special meeting of the Pennsylvania Society of the Colonial Dames of America, held January 5, in Congress Hall, the following resolution was unanimously passed, and it was ordered that a copy of the same be sent to the chairman of their meeting, to be held in the Academy, Sunday, January 7th, and to request that it be read at the meeting and spread upon the minutes.

"Resolved that the Pennsylvania Society of Colonial Dames of America place themselves on record as protesting against the deportation of the Belgians. Very truly  
Sarah Logan Wister Starr,

"President of the Society."

I have a telegram placed before me, which I am requested



to read: "To the Chairman of the Meeting in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, to protest the deportation of Belgians by Germany. The Solebury Farmers' Club of Bucks County, an organization of farmers and their families, send to this meeting its indorsement of the purpose of the meeting and any action it desires to take. George H. Yealey, Mrs. A. R. Ramage, and Mrs. Nichols, Committee for the Club."

I am sure you will agree with me that no one could better represent the country that has produced Cardinal Mercier than the first speaker.

## ADDRESS OF WALTER GEORGE SMITH, ESQ.

The occasion which has brought us together this Sunday afternoon, fellow citizens of Philadelphia, as your chairman has said to you, is a solemn one.

We are believers in different forms of Christianity; we come from different walks of life; but we are all citizens of a Republic founded upon certain principles, recognizing certain inalienable rights of mankind, and we are citizens of a city whose traditions have always been those of right and justice. From our childhood we have been taught that there is a right and there is a wrong; and to stand idly by and witness a wrong is in some way to participate in it. For 2,000 years there has been held up before the world a standard of ethics that has never been perfectly followed by any nation. With halting steps our civilization has advanced, and in proportion as it has advanced, so it has been approaching to some extent to that ideal. Now in this first quarter of the 20th century there has arisen a great power with a philosophy carefully defined, and an energy awful in its thoroughness, which, if it succeeds, will undo all that has been accomplished during the successive centuries to make the standard of Christian ethics the standard of the world. (Applause.)

For forty years this great power has been making its preparations; and in August, 1914, under the circumstances that your chairman has explained to you, those mighty armies were unleashed. They have overwhelmed Belgium and Northern France, and have carried on the war in accordance with their philosophy and their military rules with a frightfulness, to use their own expression, unknown in former warfare. Neither age, nor sex, nor innocence has been spared. Neither the venerated monuments of antiquity, nor the great cathedrals and churches consecrated to the services of Almighty God, have been spared by their Vandal hands. We, in America, have witnessed these events and have been stunned as one has fol-



lowed another. Our own national honor has been flouted. Our citizens have been killed. We can still feel the warm handclasps of friends that conveyed the heart-beats of an affection that passed from time to eternity, when the assassin's shot caused the bodies of thousands of American women and children to be scattered on the ocean. We bore ourselves patiently and with forbearance, with the hope that results might follow, but in vain. It seems that nothing but action can convince the perverted element that rules the German people; but since there cannot be action, and since as good citizens we must support the legally constituted authorities of the Republic, there is at least one thing that we can do, which no municipal law forbids, and the law of conscience commands. We can protest with all the energy of our being against these outrages upon human rights. (Applause.)

After laying waste almost all of Belgium and much of Northern France, the last stroke of calculated malice has fallen. The women of Northern France have been deported from their homes and sent to work in the harvest fields and the men of Belgium by the thousands are sent to work in the German workshops and mines. We are not acting upon rumor; we are not acting upon adverse opinion that comes from biased sources. Carefully as every avenue of information has been guarded there is at least one great voice that all of the power of the German Empire has not been able to still, a voice which echoes throughout the world. That is authority enough for us, though there is other evidence mountain high.

Let me read to you the language of the great Belgian Cardinal: "The naked truth," says Cardinal Mercier, "is that every deported workman is another soldier for the German army. He will take the place of a German workman, who will be made into a soldier. Thus the situation which we denounce to the civilized world may be reduced to these terms: 400,000 workmen have been thrown out of work by no fault of their own, and largely on account of the regime of the occupation. Sons, husbands, and fathers of families, they bear their lot

without murmuring, respectful of public order; national solidarity provides their pressing wants; by dint of unselfish thrift and self-denial, they escape extreme destitution, and they await with dignity and in a mutual affection which our national sorrows have intensified, the end of our common ordeal.

"Groups of soldiers introduced themselves forcibly in the homes of these people, tearing the young people out of the arms of their parents, the husband from his wife, the father from his children; at the point of the bayonet they block the entrances of the homes, preventing wives and mothers from rushing out to say farewell to them; they align the captives in groups of forty to fifty and push them forcibly into freight cars; the locomotive is under pressure, and as soon as a train load is ready, an officer gives the signal and they depart. While they certainly take the unemployed, they also take a large number—in the proportion of one quarter for the Arrondissement of Mons—of men who were never out of work and belonging to diversified professions, butchers, bakers, tailors, brewery workers, electricians, farmers; they even take the youngest men, college and university students, or young men from other high schools."

What eloquence can exceed the simple statement of this great Shepherd of God's flock. He who stands like that other great bishop, St. Ambrose, unterrified by the power of an Empire.

My fellow-citizens, I have said to you that all that is left to us is a protest. You may ask what is the value of a protest. Fellow-citizens, there is no power on this earth, no matter how strongly it may be in arms, that can stand the silent force of public opinion. (Applause.) Much as we may deplore things that we cannot with good taste and propriety discuss now, there is one thing which we know and it is this, that the public opinion of the United States of America is most earnestly sought by the warring peoples abroad. (Applause.) Let our moral indignation be expressed in no uncertain terms against this iniquity; let the law of religion and the law of justice, as implanted in our hearts by our Creator, be uttered in no uncertain terms,

and it will be more valuable than an army of a million of men.  
(Applause.)

And so we may rejoice, my fellow-citizens; we may rejoice even in the midst of these solemn thoughts, that here in this great city of Philadelphia men and women are united in denunciation of the intolerable wrong, that has brought us together to make our solemn protest this afternoon. (Applause.)

## ADDRESS OF MISS AGNES REPPLIER

MISS REPPLIER: When I was a child, I learned in my catechism that there are nine ways of being accessory to another person's sin, and two of them—very neutral ways, indeed, are by silence and consent. Now we have not all been silent in the face of Germany's cruelties. For more than two years they have sickened our hearts, robbed us of our peace of mind and of our pious belief in civilization, and destroyed at once the pleasure and the pride of living. For more than two years American citizens and American newspapers have protested vainly against the burning and sacking of towns, the shooting of civilians, the desecration of churches, the violation of women, the levying of indemnities, and the deportation of citizens. Germany's view of a conquered country is the old simple view familiar to readers of the *Iliad*. It belongs to her. Its homes and its harvests, its wealth, its inhabitants are here, to do with as she pleases. The fortunes of war have given Belgium and Poland into her hands, just as the fortunes of war gave Troy to the Greeks; and men and women are the spoils of victory.

Now the civilization of the world is the business of all who live upon the world. It is what the human race has struggled to achieve since the beginning of recorded history. We cannot see it crashing into barbarism, and content ourselves with echoing Cain's glib question to the Almighty, "Am I my brother's keeper?" In so far as we, a free people, have consented to international crimes to injustice, and to inhumanity that has no peer, in just so far we are accessory to sin, and our acquiescence has immeasurably strengthened Germany's conviction that she is above and beyond the judgment of the neutral world.

When Belgium was invaded, and her territory seized by the conquering Germans, a solemn assurance was given to Cardinal Mercier (statesman and saint) by the military governor of Antwerp and of Brussels that "young men need have no fear of being carried off to Germany, either for enrollment in the army



or for forcible employment." To-day thousands upon thousands of men have been sent to work in German munition factories. The slave-raids in Belgium bear the most amazing likeness to the slave-raids which Europe deemed it her duty to suppress in Africa. Information was sought and obtained concerning the number of able-bodied men whose service could be made profitable to their masters. These men were rounded up in the old approved slave-raiding fashion, examined like slaves to see if they were physically fit, torn like slaves from their homes and their families (it is the very essence of slavery that families do not count), crowded into slave cars instead of slave ships, and carried to Germany to make arms for the destruction of their allies. One poor school-teacher, snatched from his school, wrote on his linen collar a few words of good-bye to his wife and children, and dropped it from the car window. Twelve men of Ghent refused to go, and were shot,—martyrs to liberty. There is but one road to freedom for Germany's captives, and that lies through the doors of death. Ghent has bred brave men always. Her burghers and her weavers were alike the terror of prince and noble, because they forever resisted any form of oppression, and thank God, they resist it still.

I know of nothing more poignant in all history than the appeal of the Dutch members of the league of neutral States to the United States of America, imploring us to take the lead in a collective remonstrance of all the neutral nations against the unbearable violence of Germany. Consider the helplessness of Holland! Think of her size, her population, her level lands, lying at the mercy of the invader. She is afraid and her fear is a reasonable fear. But she is also anguished, and her grief and fury have lifted from her forever the ill-chosen adjective, phlegmatic. She is so close to all the misery which bruises her. She has no comfortable dividing ocean, and no chance at all to snatch at the coward's refuge, immediately. It is no use for Germany to say to Holland, as she says to the United States, after every fresh outrage, that she did not do it. Holland always knows she did do it, for the evidence lies at her

doors. It is no use for Germany to say to Holland as she says to the United States that what she does is necessary for the good of Belgium. Holland knows that Belgium is being purposely bled to death. Then Professor Franz von Liszt of the University of Berlin dared to tell us that "the quiet unselfishness of Germany's conduct to Belgium will receive the gratitude of the world," his words were solemnly printed in American newspapers, and solemnly quoted by sympathetic readers. But even a Berlin professor would repeat such words to Holland because the irony of them would be too forlorn to provoke a smile in that unhappy land.

It is not for us to ask ourselves whether such meetings as this we hold to-day will be of any use. It may be of none, but we cannot in conscience hold our peace. Holland has protested forcibly against the deportation of Belgians, and Germany's answer was of such a character that she has been asked to revise it before it can be read to the Dutch parliament. On the other hand, a few of the French women torn so shamefully from their homes were returned at the repeated solicitations of Spain, and the Spanish King is doing his level best to-day to obtain the same justice for Belgians.

Mr. Wilson has told us that self-possession is the supreme test of a nation's mettle; but he makes no allowance for circumstance. If we Americans were a conquered people, and were being carried away to toil in the land of our conquerors, to make arms for our complete subjugation, self-possession would be vastly to our credit, and would indeed show of what mettle we were made. For to bear adversity nobly is to reach the highest plane of Pagan philosophy and of Christian sanctity. But when we contemplate the sufferings of others, and the injustice done them, it is possible to overdo our self-possession. It is possible for you and for me to tranquilize our minds at the cost of our souls. We tire quickly of unhappiness and horror, but this is a corrupt fatigue. We have no moral right to tire until the last injury has been redressed.

It is not enough to say to Germany that the deportation

of Belgian civilians is making an unfavorable impression on the United States. Since the hour the Lusitania was sunk, Germany has done little else but make unfavorable impressions on the United States, and she does not seem to be losing rest over our disapproval. She does not even understand why we disapprove, because the pitiless abuse of force is the first principle of what Maeterlinck calls her "mad-house morality." But we, citizens of a free democracy, to whom the abuse of force is a shameful horror, have met to-day to offer resolutions which will embody simply and strongly our condemnation of a great national crime. We have met to echo the words of Washington at the opening of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. "Let us raise the standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is in the hands of God." (Prolonged applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Great problems requiring proof can generally be solved by a lawyer, and especially a Philadelphia lawyer. We have loaned him to New York, but we claim the next speaker, the Hon. James M. Beck, who will discuss "The Evidence in the Case."

## ADDRESS OF HON. JAMES M. BECK

MR. BECK: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen.

We are met under extraordinary circumstances and for an extraordinary purpose.

If three short years ago any man or woman here present had ventured to predict the subject-matter of this meeting, I think he or she would have been then regarded as a fit subject for Bedlam. The swift and terrible retrogression of civilization toward savagery can thus be measured by the fact that that which would have been unthinkable, three short years ago, is to-day by daily repetition almost a commonplace of contemporary history.

I am told that in holding this meeting here a precedent has been broken that gives to it a special significance. For the first time in all its long and conspicuously useful history this venerable temple of art has been opened on Sunday to a public meeting or entertainment. (Applause.) It could not, believe me, have been opened for any better purpose. (Applause.) The day, the place and the locality are appropriate to the subject-matter of our very serious deliberation this afternoon. We are admonished by the Decalogue to "remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy," and I know of no better way in which to keep that day holy than to champion the cause of the weak and oppressed against shameful and intolerable outrage and tyranny. (Applause.) The same great Decalogue said: "Thou shalt not kill;" "Thou shalt not steal," and it is because 6,000 Belgians, men, women and children, all of them non-combatants, have been slaughtered in that land of horrors in defiance of international law, and because the sustenance of that brave people has been shamefully taken from them in like violation of all that civilization stands for, that we meet on this Sabbath Day, as citizens of this Republic, to protest. In this we are not violating, we are vindicating the great principles of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal." This great historic city is also an appropriate locality



for this meeting, for had not the people of Philadelphia met in common with their brethren of other American cities to protest against this infamy, the "very stones of the street would have cried out against them."

I remember when I was a boy, that we gathered, one beautiful May day in 1876, in Independence Square, whose arching trees made the aisles of nature's cathedral. It was the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and the darkness of the State Department's safe in Washington, had been brought out and again shown to the light of day. In the grand-stand were the diplomats of every country in the world, including the Ambassador of that great empire from which we separated, and as the great charter of our liberties was again shown to the eyes of men, the audience rose as one man, to salute one of the most notable protests against tyranny that the world had ever known, a protest that had not only proclaimed the political equality of man but had asserted that every man had a right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

If the people of Philadelphia, a city devoted peculiarly to the great principles of constitutional liberty, had been faithless in joining other Americans in this protest, I confess that I as a native Philadelphian would have felt a certain sense of shame. But fortunately this great meeting, for the honor of this great city, has assembled, and, of all the meetings that I have attended for a similar purpose, it gives me the deepest gratification to say that this is the largest. I venture to say that the voice that will go from this audience will carry with it a peculiar force and power.

When we consider the case of Belgium, we are, after all, considering but one chapter of the blackest volume of human history. It is by no means the worst chapter. If 6,000 Belgian non-combatants have already been slaughtered, why 600,000 Armenians have fallen in the last two years under the same ruthless frightfulness. If 125,000 Belgian men have been put into cattle cars, ticketed like cattle, and sent to another coun-

try to work against their own, why, 300,000 have been taken from that land of lasting horror, unhappy Poland!

Why, then, do we make such an especial feature of the damnable wrongs done to Belgium?

I think the answer is obvious. In the first place, there is a greater certitude as to the facts. Attempts may be made to justify or condone German tyranny in Belgium by an extraordinary perversion of reasons, of which Miss Repplier gave one instance in the learned Berlin professor; but, after all, the naked fact that women and girls last April were summarily taken from their homes and transported to fields to work as white slaves under Prussian bayonets for six months is a fact that is not denied by Germany's apologists. It is explained as best it can be, but the fact is as sure as that I am standing upon this platform. The fact that thousands of Belgians are now deported into Germany is also not disputed. So that at least we stand upon the solid ground of assured facts.

But, ah! there is a greater reason than that why Belgium has such a peculiar appeal to our pity and sympathy. It is because the striking down of that nation is possibly and probably the most malignant act in modern history. (Applause.) It was accompanied by circumstances of such peculiar treachery that an Apache Indian would have hesitated to have done that which Germany did in its sudden and treacherous attack upon this little country in the north of Europe. (Applause.)

Let us consider the historic background for one moment, and then if you think that the Paxton boys in the middle of the eighteenth century did a cowardly and treacherous act when they fell upon the little band of Christianized Indians in Lancaster and killed them, every man, woman and child, let us see in what respect that horror differs from the case of Belgium.

Here again we stand upon facts about which there can be no dispute. No one contends that on the 1st of August, 1914, there was the slightest quarrel between Belgium and Germany. Belgium had not taken any part in the diplomatic controversy, and had not asserted any interest in the quarrel

between Serbia and Austria. This peaceful little nation had sat silently by and was peculiarly constrained to be silent, as the war clouds gathered in Europe, because under the treaty of 1839 it had been singled out to be a nation whose neutrality was guaranteed by the powers and assumed by Belgium, which, therefore, was not free to enter into alliances but was obliged to be neutral with respect to the powers that thus guaranteed its inviolability. Therefore, on August 1st, 1914, there was not any pretence that Belgium had given to Germany the slightest provocation for any attack whatsoever.

Belgium, moreover, had four reasons, reaching down to the fundamentals of human society, why it should not be the subject of a wanton and unprovoked attack.

It had, in the first place, the great guarantees of international law. We do not always adequately consider what an inestimable heritage of civilization international law is. It is the product, perhaps the noblest achievement, of Christianity and democracy. Here is a great body of law which claims to hold even sovereign nations in check, and the spirit, the majesty, the power, the efficacy of international law were admirably expressed in that preamble to the great Declaration, to which I referred a moment ago, when our Fathers said that a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind" required that this nation, as every other nation, should declare the causes that impel them to any act; that there was a great moral law which rose above and beyond the interests, the powers, the rights, of sovereign nations; and that, therefore, there was a co-ordination of the world in the fact that every nation was obliged to obey this great body of law that had been slowly and painfully evolved as a result of progressive civilization.

International law was regarded as a heritage, in which every nation had a vital stake, by Prussia, when we, at the time of our Civil War, took from the British steamer *Trent* the Confederate commissioners, Mason and Slidell. Although the wrong we had done in violating a neutral flag only primarily affected England, yet nevertheless Prussia, in a note from its

then foreign minister, Bernstorff—who I believe was the father of the present Bernstorff—said that the sanctity of a neutral flag was a subject in which Prussia also had an interest, and therefore Prussia demanded, in conjunction with England, that our country should respect that neutral flag and return the Confederate commissioners, although they were plotting against the very life of our country.

Let me say, in passing, that if the taking of Mason and Slidell from the *Trent* was then Prussia's concern, the invasion of Belgium is the just concern of the United States to-day.

In addition to this great principle of the sanctity of territory under international law, Belgium had the guarantee of the treaty of 1839, to which Prussia was a party, that it should be forever inviolable.

Moreover, forty-four sovereign nations had met twice at The Hague and had laid down principles for the government of nations, which were simply the codification of this great body of international law; and The Hague convention thus again emphasized that a state, whether it were little or great, had a right that its territory should be regarded as its own, just as an individual can say of his own home, that it is his asylum of defence and refuge.

To these three guarantees must be added the express assurances which Germany made to Belgium. In 1870 Bismarck had said to Belgium that the very suggestion that Prussia would violate the sanctity of Belgium was so remote that any assurance to the contrary would be clearly "superfluous." In 1911, in the Morocco crisis, Germany again gave the most solemn assurances to Belgium, and again in 1913, and in 1914. As late as that fateful last week of July, 1914, renewed assurances were given by Germany that Belgium need have no concern with reference to its powerful neighbor. As late as August 2nd the German Minister in Brussels told the Belgian Foreign Minister that he had no reason to believe that these oft-repeated special guarantees would in any respect be violated; and to that was added a specific assurance given by



the German Ambassador in Brussels to the press of that city that while Belgium's neighbor might have the roof of his house burned, yet Belgium need not fear any harm; and yet it was that very night, at 1.30 in the morning, that Belgium's Foreign Minister was called from his bed and threatened with an immediate attack; on August 4th Germany declared war on Belgium and simultaneously, an army, that must have been assembling for at least one week, for it numbered approximately 750,000 men, entered Belgium and the great struggle began.

It is as clear as any fact can be in history that the attack on Belgium was not one as to which there can be a reasonable dispute as to its provocation; but it was a deliberate, treacherous and extremely selfish attack by a great power upon a little power, in order that the great power might save the lives of its own soldiers and conserve its own interests by taking the shortest route through France. (Applause.)

It took the short route to Paris, but even the supreme prize, for which Germany sacrificed its honor, was withheld from it, thanks to the immortal bravery of the French nation. (Loud applause.)

Under those circumstances Germany owed to Belgium, after it had accomplished its nefarious purpose, peculiar consideration and tolerant treatment, because, apart from any other consideration, when they had conquered the Belgian people, it was then the duty of Germany to redeem the promise of its Chancellor, to which Mr. Cadwalader referred, that when their military goal had been reached by crossing Belgium, that the "wrong" that had been done would be fully redressed.

How was it redressed? In the thirty years' war (and its horror has lived in the remembrance of mankind for three centuries), there happened the siege of Magdeburg, and before that the sack of Rome by the mercenaries of Charles the Fifth, two of the wickedest atrocities up to that time which history has recorded; but mankind now witnesses not the pillage of a city like Rome nor Magdeburg, but the deliberate, cold-blooded and selfish spoliation of a whole nation.

This is being accomplished by slowly sucking the very sustenance of the life of Belgium. Germany had, as has already been stated, solemnly assured, not only Cardinal Mercier, but other distinguished Belgians, after it had conquered the greater part of Belgium, that if the one million Belgian refugees would return to that land of horror they would be treated with generous consideration; and a solemn promise was given to that eminent priest of God that no Belgian would be compelled to work against his will or his country. On this promise thousands of Belgians returned.

The horrors of the invasion soon reduced a large part of the Belgian population to a condition of destitution. If they were unable to provide for their own sustenance, the duty was upon Germany, as upon any army of occupation. What happened? England and France, knowing full well that every dollar that they gave to help the Belgian people would necessarily operate to relieve Germany from this burden, gave over \$200,000,000. (Applause.) They gave it through the American Commission and the National Belgian Committee. America gave approximately \$10,000,000, upon which I sometimes think that we pride ourselves inordinately, as if we had done an extraordinary thing, without stopping to think, that taking every war charity, while America has made out of the war at least \$20 per capita for every man, woman and child, we have not contributed in the two and one-half years of the greatest catastrophe in human history so much as 50 cents per capita, and not 10 cents a head for Belgium. The less we complacently say with respect to our generosity to the people of Belgium, the better, because that which has kept the Belgian people from starvation has not been the eight or ten millions, which we contributed out of our overflowing abundance, but the two hundred million dollars that England and France, constrained by pity and gratitude for what Belgium had done for their cause, contributed.

Under these circumstances, peculiar considerations of justice and generosity required that Germany should not in-

crease the burden of this unhappy people, for whom it invited the charity of the world by taking from them the means of life.

Instead of respecting this obligation, Germany perpetrated a wicked fraud on the world. She surrounded Belgium with a barbed wire fence, charged with the deadly electricity; she took over the telegraphs and railroads, some of which she dismantled to seize the rails; she stripped many of the factories of their machinery and raw material; she took specie from the banks, the securities from individuals. In some cases she gave in payment of her requisitions a paper acknowledgment of a future repayment to be honored or repudiated hereafter as she wills. \$500,000,000 in property was taken from the Belgian people by the Conqueror;—not only the sustenance upon which they might live, but the very means by which idleness and starvation could have been avoided, and to-day there are a million and a half Belgians in the bread line.

Have you ever thought what that would mean if applied proportionately to our own country? If Germany, having given us for many years assurances that she would never attack us, would suddenly attack this country and take away our railroads and telegraphs, if your citizens could not go from one part of Philadelphia to another without permission, if you, being unemployed, could not get employment without the consent of the Conqueror, and a proportionate number of Americans were thus reduced to destitution, it would mean that in this country twenty million of people would be in the bread line. (Applause.)

Having brought about this state of general destitution, the army of occupation commenced the enslavement of women in Belgium and France, an atrocity which to my mind is even more indefensible than the deportation of men.

Last Easter these slave raids began in Lille, Turcoing, Roubaix and other places. Women of all ages, classes and conditions were seized, put in cattle cars and forcibly deported to the farms of Northern France, and made to work under the bayonets of their oppressors.

When in Europe last summer, I met a distinguished official of our country, an American, whose official work took him back of the German lines. If I were at liberty to mention his name, it would carry conviction to every fair-minded man in this audience.

I will give the name to Mr. Cadwalader, an honorable citizen of Philadelphia, with the understanding that he will never repeat it, so if there be any doubting Thomases in this audience let them write Mr. Cadwalader, and let Mr. Cadwalader say whether the name of the man, if given to this audience, would not have carried conviction to any fair-minded man both with respect to his opportunity of observation, and the disinterested character of his statements.

This gentleman told me that he had witnessed some details of this deportation of women. He said a Prussian officer would summarily summon the women of a given commune to stand in front of their houses, with little satchels in their hand, and then an officer would select or reject them as their physical condition seemed suitable for the hard work in the fields, and they were then taken much as slaves were taken in Central Africa. He told me that a Belgian father would leave his home in the morning to work and then his wife and daughter would be taken from their home in his absence and when he would return in the evening both were gone, he knew not where, nor could he know of their fate until he subsequently learned or surmised that they were a part of the group of unhappy women in that commune who had been transported to work like slaves of ancient times in the harvest fields of France. I asked this question: "Is there any reason to believe that this is done for immoral purposes?" and he said, "No." I said, "Do the food and clothing the American people send to the Belgian people reach them?" and he said he was satisfied they did; that the German military government did not sieze anything that was contributed by the American people or through the American Commission, but the products of the harvest fields, the work of this army of women slaving under the summer sun, was at first



shipped to Germany to feed its people, and these poor women did not even have the satisfaction of knowing that the products of their hard labor would go to prevent the starvation of their own country. Finally, the protest of Mr. Hoover against this course became so persistent that the American Commission did succeed in getting a portion of the harvest of this enforced labor for the benefit of the starving people of Belgium.

What followed? There were probably 500,000, it is variously estimated, idle men in Belgium. On May 2nd, 1916, the German Government passed an ordinance that no man who was unemployed should get work without the consent of the Military Government. Thus they held the entire labor situation under their control. Then they provided that any man who refused to work, he not being able to work except with the permission of his conquerors, should thereupon be transported to another part of Belgium and put to such work as the Army of Occupation might require. And when that did not answer, they thereupon commenced, early in October of this year, to summon the unemployed laboring men on 24 hours' notice to appear in the center town of their commune, with one hand-satchel, and there they were examined like cattle as to their physical capacity, and those that were supposed to be physically apt for slavery were taken in cattle trucks and shipped into Germany, with the result that 125,000 have already gone. Some have returned, after working under conditions of semi-starvation, affected with tuberculosis, and others have come back from the trenches near Soissons, where they were obliged to work against the flag of their own nation.

Such a thing has never been known in modern times. You must go back to Rome for a parallel, and to realize the full horror of the Belgian situation, to Babylonian days. It is a fact that in this Twentieth Century there has been a retrogression to barbarism, such as I stated in my opening sentence, would have been unthinkable three short years ago.

Let me very briefly, because I must draw this very hasty discussion of the matter to a close, discuss for a minute or two the suggested defences for what has been done.

In the first place, I suppose that when this war is over an attempt will be made to justify the oppression of Belgium on the ground of reprisals. It is probably a fact that when the German hosts treacherously invaded Belgium, for a brief period of time, certainly not more than a week, there were clashes between the civilian population of Belgium and the invader. If it had not been so I would have less respect for the people of Belgium. (Applause.) Suppose the Belgian non-combatants did, acting with the fury so justly inspired by this wanton and treacherous attack, fire upon the German soldiers? Why! that is what your fathers did at Lexington and Concord, when General Gage went to Lexington and then to Concord to seize the military stores. And yet I never heard, even in the Eighteenth Century, when international morality was not supposed to be what it was once in the Twentieth Century, that General Gage burned Boston and killed its leading men and transported its women and men in captivity; destroyed towns and burned colleges and churches.

It is said that these deportations are due to the fact that England has prevented raw materials from coming into Belgium, and that in that way it became necessary for the good of the Belgian non-combatants to remove them to Germany. Twice the English Government proposed to Germany, through our Government, that if it could be so safe-guarded that any raw materials that they allowed to go through the blockade would be used only by the Belgian people and not by the German Government—in other words, if the transportation of the raw materials could be effected under adequate guarantees and the American Commission for the relief of Belgium, England was quite willing to modify the blockade to that extent. (Applause.) Germany would never agree; and how can any one reproach England and France for refusing to allow raw materials to go into a country to which they had already given, as I have said before, \$200,000,000 for the relief of the people, when they had good reason to know that the German Army of Occupation would directly or indirectly appropriate the gift

and thus practically negative their charity? Why should they pour raw materials into Belgium which Germany needs and would take? (Applause.)

When I was a boy, we thought the most despicable thing we could say of another man was that he was so mean that he would take a penny from a cripple; and that is precisely what Germany has done when she tacitly invites the world to contribute to the relief of Belgium and then indirectly deprives its people of the benefactions.

Again it is suggested in defence that the Belgians were idle and even starving and that, therefore, it was an economic necessity to do this. Well! who made the Belgian people starve? If they are in a state of destitution, what nation brought that state of destitution into existence? Can the German people, having first treacherously attacked and then ruthlessly impoverished the Belgian people, defend a crime against humanity and international law on the ground of the very conditions of destitution and suffering that their violation of law have brought about? Surely not.

And then it is contended, according to one leading German official, that it is for the good of the Belgian people that they are being taken to Germany; that they are exceedingly happy and contented as they are put into the cattle cars, and that smiles radiate their faces at their good fortune! Abraham Lincoln once autographed a picture for a friend, and this is what he wrote:

“I never knew a man who wanted to be a slave. Consider if you know any good thing that no one desires.”

The Secretary of State of the German Empire, Von Hef-ferich, made a statement on December 2nd, 1916, in which he says:

“We do not employ these workmen in such industries as are excluded in international convention; but apart from this we are merely doing our duty towards our men in the fighting line. We cannot

allow an element of unrest to remain in the rear of the German troops, in the fighting line, and the unemployed workmen in Belgium constitute such an element of unrest. It is our duty to see that there should be peace and order, and we are achieving this by drawing the Belgian workmen to Germany and finding employment for them."

Thus the true cause of these cruel deportations is acknowledged to be the security of the German army in Belgium! That is an unexpectedly frank and truthful statement. All these horrors have not crushed the spirit of the people of Belgium, so the oppressor must protect himself. He still fears the vengeance of an unarmed but dauntless people. (Applause.) It was Caesar who said that of all the tribes of Gaul the Belgians were the bravest. (Applause.) Certainly, to-day, after two and a half years, that eulogium is shown to be well merited. This people, who had the most ample practical reason for submitting to the iron rule of the conqueror, who could have said with some justice, when the crisis first developed, that if France and England and the whole world were not immediately ready to protect Belgium, there was no reason why Belgium should sacrifice itself for the rest of the world (applause); this little people, knowing that the greatest military power in all history was at its very doors, with 750,000 men ready to cross its frontier, thought that its honor was infinitely above its safety; and to-day, after two and a half years of the most cruel and ruthless oppression, Belgium still proudly sings its national hymn in the very hearing of its oppressor and its people still refuse to work for the conqueror; this little people still accepts starvation rather than sign the contracts under which "voluntary" employment is sought to be secured; this little people keeps its flag unstained and untarnished. (Applause.)

If I were asked to say who the three bravest men of this great crisis are, I would mention without hesitation Carl Liebknecht, of Germany, to whom all honor! (Applause); King Albert of Belgium. (Applause); And the third, Cardinal Mercier. (Applause.)

If anyone asks you upon what authority the suffering of the Belgian people is rested, then let me quote these lines of Cardinal Mercier, and I beg you to remember the circumstances under which they were said. Cardinal Mercier, that great priest, standing in his cathedral at Brussels, facing that which to him is the altar of the living God, with the people of Brussels gathered about him, who would have known the truth or falsity of what he said, standing there with the solemnity of the great cathedral about him, "where the Eternal Ages watch and wait," said these words:

The four or five weeks that I have just passed have been perhaps the most painful in my life, the most anguishing of my Episcopal career. The fathers and mothers who are pressing about this pulpit will understand me.

I have seen hundreds of my flock in peril and in tears. During three days, on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday last, from morn to eve, I went about the regions whence the foremost workmen and artisans of my diocese were taken by force into exile. At Wavrecourt, St. Etienne, Nivelles, Tubize, and Braune l'Alleud I entered more than a hundred half empty homes. Husbands were absent, children were orphans, sisters, sad eyed and with inert arms, sat beside their sewing machines. A gloomy silence reigned in these cottages. It was as though there were a corpse in the house. But hardly had I addressed a word of sympathy to the mother when there was an outburst of sobs and lamentations, of angry tones, with movements of magnificent pride.

The memory of these heart-breaking scenes never leaves me. I would like to hurry to Antwerp, Tirlemont, Dieste—wherever they are repeated, wherever there is sorrow to assuage, tears to dry, hearts to console. But I cannot. Eager to do it though I am, I have neither the strength nor the time. There-

fore, dear brethren, I thought I would come to you in the center of my diocese and of our country.

I say to you, my brethren, without hate or a spirit of reprisal, that I should be unworthy of this episcopal ring which the church placed upon my finger, and of this cross which she placed upon my breast, if, obeying a human passion, I hesitated to proclaim that law violated remains none the less law and that injustice based on force is none the less injustice. (Applause.)

Think of that brave man of God standing in his pulpit, knowing full well that at any moment indignity, humiliation and death might be his portion, facing his people, and yet upholding the principles of justice. (Applause.)

If it be a choice between kings and not between priest and Emperor, then I would say that, crownless or crowned, throneless or enthroned, I would rather have the fate in history of King Albert of Belgium than the fate of that at present partly victorious monarch, the German Kaiser, even though his iron rule should extend from Berlin to Bagdad. (Applause.)

I have said much about Belgium and Germany; but what about our own country? As some one has said, what is the use of these meetings, what results do we reach?

I will tell you.

In the first place, they help to ease our conscience. That is one thing.

In the second place, we do keep alive the flickering flame of public opinion in this country which defends the right and reprobates the wrong. (Applause.)

In the third place, we give comfort and consolation to that crucified people—because one thing that has been of some assistance to them in the hour of their martyrdom has been the fact that across the Atlantic a great people deeply and truly sympathizes with their miseries, and has helped to sustain them.

But is that all? My friends, the tragic and pitiful fact is these horrors that Belgium has suffered since its subjugation,



that have torn down the fabric of civilization until it has fallen into almost cureless ruin, could probably have been prevented in this country, and by one man. (Loud applause.)

It is probable that there has never been a time since the war began that Germany, if it had believed that the Government of the United States was in earnest, and would vindicate its words by corresponding deeds, would have failed to conform to the requirements of international law. (Applause.)

I am not here—beyond that statement—to express one further word of criticism. I do not criticise the President's motives or impugn his good intentions. I am only asserting his power to stop these indefensible wrongs. To test this, if the President of the United States will take one single piece of paper and one pen and expend the thousandth part of a penny in ink, and will communicate through our ambassador in Berlin an insistent message to the German Chancellor, demanding, under penalty of an immediate severance of diplomatic relations, immediate compliance with our just demands, these deportations will stop.

He has only to say to Germany that unless he receives immediate assurance that the deportations will cease, Count von Bernstorff will get his passports. (Loud applause and cheers.) The return journey of that particular diplomat to rejoin his former companions, Boy-Ed and von Papen, is sadly overdue. (Applause.)

But instead of any such effectual action our *chargé* in Berlin is simply instructed to advise the German Foreign Office in a note that he does not even leave but reads that the United States, in most "friendly" manner, feels that this deportation of Belgians is calculated to leave an unfavorable impression in the United States. (Laughter.)

That kind of treacle is not the kind that is needed in a time of blood and iron—and we are living in a time of blood and iron. I may be in error—I do not think I am—in saying that at this late day, a mere threat to sever relations will stop the deportations, but I am confident that, having thus severed

diplomatic relations, if Germany so little cares for the good opinion and further action of this country that it continues these shameful violations of international law, a further threat that the United States will abandon neutrality and place its material resources at the service of the Allies, will be effectual, for Germany dare not quarrel with the United States in this crisis of her fortunes. (Applause.)

There is a fine line of Lowell:

“Never land long lease of empire won,  
Whose sons sat silent when base deeds were done.”

My countrymen, my fellow-citizens of Philadelphia, have not too many sons of America sat silent in the last two and a half years when base deeds were done? This matter vitally concerns us as a nation. We are drifting slowly to an abyss. I do not want to go into that larger aspect of the question, as it is beyond the immediate subject of this particular meeting, but it will be a lasting shame and injury to this country if before this great World War is over the United States does not in some insistent and vigorous manner align itself with those principles of humanity and international law which lie at the very foundation of that which we call civilization.

We have done so to some extent in the matter of the submerging of vessels on the high seas—how ineffectually we know, because the sinking of vessels has become an idle commonplace of our daily newspaper—but the fact remains that on the larger questions of the war, the question involved in the attempt brutally to destroy Serbia, the question involved in the invasion of Belgium, the question involved in the deportation of these Belgians, and of those in Poland, the questions involved in a hundred atrocities, which have made this a war of peculiar infamy in the history of the world, upon that there has been no sound, strong note from America such as we would have believed from its past traditions and its historical antecedents it would have given.

All that we can do—and this is my closing word—as

Americans is to keep alive the flame of patriotism in this country; and, so far as we can, influence our countrymen and our government to voice in behalf of Belgium a strong, insistent and powerful appeal, which, even though it come at this late day, would yet do something to save our country from having, like Saul of Tarsus, stood silently by while the martyr, Stephen, was stoned to death.

Lowell, the great poet of democracy, wrote of a similar crisis:

“Once to every man and nation comes the moment to  
decide

In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good  
or evil side.

Some great cause, God’s new Messiah, offering each  
the bloom or blight,

Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep  
upon the right,

And the choice goes by forever ’twixt that darkness  
and the light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party  
thou shalt stand,

Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the  
dust against our land?

Though the cause of evil prosper, yet ’tis truth  
alone is strong,

And, albeit she wanders outcast now, I see around  
her throng

Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from  
all wrong.”

(Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: The resolutions will now be read by  
George Wharton Pepper, Esq.

GEORGE WHARTON PEPPER, ESQ.: Mr. Chairman,  
I rise to propose these resolutions, in view of what has been  
said in our hearing this afternoon.

RESOLUTIONS:

At a mass meeting of citizens of Philadelphia assembled in  
the American Academy of Music, and called without regard to  
creed or political opinion, the following minute was adopted:

By unimpeachable evidence we are convinced that thousands of unarmed and defenceless non-combatant Belgian citizens are daily being seized and carried from their own country into parts of Germany to them and to their friends unknown, there to be subjected to the pains of involuntary servitude. By this systematic deportation, Belgium is being dispoiled of such of her sons as have escaped the sword of the invader. The affronts and outrages offered to that unhappy nation have followed one another so rapidly that we have not ceased to shudder at one before being compelled to gasp at another. To the offence of violated neutrality was added the sin of slaughter. The destruction of the brave defenders of their homes was succeeded by the devastation of the fatherland, by the desecration of sacred places, and by the spoliation of treasures of art. In the wake of outrage and pillage there followed the theft of those things without which the support of life became impossible. When idleness had thus been forced upon one of the most industrious peoples in the world, their involuntary inactivity was made the ghastly excuse for casting them into slavery. Life having been taken from those who counted it not dear unto themselves it is the final crime of the invader to wrest from the survivors that which they hold far dearer than life—the sacred liberty of the citizens of a free commonwealth.

In protesting as we now do against the crime of deportation under which our Belgian brethren are writing, we reserve to ourselves the right to record a similar protest if by reliable evidence it is at any time established that similar offences are committed elsewhere and by others. The case before us to-day is the case of Belgium—Belgium with whom we suffer not merely

through the power of human sympathy, but because the blows struck at one non-combatant nation are struck potentially at all—because, if America is spared, Belgium will be seen to have suffered in our stead—because if we are not to be spared, the case of Belgium is one from which we may well take timely warning.

With Belgium before our eyes we solemnly declare:

First: That the deportation of her people does violence to every consideration of humanity and justice and constitutes an offence against the civil law, the criminal law, the law of morals, the law of nations and all laws whatsoever.

Second: That it is the duty of the government of the United States to make to the Imperial German Government a protest couched in language which shall transcend the diplomatic vocabulary, if such a course is necessary to make its meaning clear.

Third: That, irrespective of former governmental action, it is hereby made known to all men everywhere that no government which, after due protest, persists in casting freemen into bondage can no longer be regarded by liberty-loving Americans as having a place in the family of civilized nations.

Fourth: That a copy of this minute be transmitted by the secretaries of this meeting to the President of the United States, and that all possible publicity be given to it as the deliberate judgment of the citizens of that city in which American liberty was conceived and born.

(The reading of the resolutions was received with tremendous applause.)

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Citizens of Philadelphia, you have heard the resolutions just read. I will now put them to your vote and ask you to express it in no uncertain way. Those in favor of the adoption of these resolutions will signify their assent by calling out "aye."

(Prolonged cries of aye.)

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Unless we have a call for a negative vote we will not ask for it. (Laughter and applause.)

The resolutions were unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned.

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